

30 April 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KNOCHE

1. Please include the following in our message to the DCI:

"Today I left with Mac Bundy the proposal for three low-level missions over Cuba as amended by you. He suggested that it be referred to Special Group for Thursday. I demurred, stating that it was my understanding that the missions needed only the approval of higher authority. Bundy said he agreed but that higher authority had made a commitment to have Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense present for the discussion. In this connection, at NSC this morning Bundy stated that lack of knowledge of activity in Soviet combat command camps certainly appeared to justify low-level flights and McNamara reacted violently to the effect that if we are going to invade we should go all the way. Rusk wasn't present but neither Ball nor Martin expressed themselves. The Attorney General appears not repeat not responsive to the low-level requirement. The situation resembled the climate experienced last August and September with McNamara if anything even more adamant against low levels.

3. The net result of all this is that Bundy appears only moderately supporting the flights and predicts disapproval. McNamara definitely opposed. State Department noncommittal in Rusk's absence but am sure, if required to decide now, would oppose. Possibility that Rusk might see it differently but I have my doubts.

4. I would appreciate your guidance as to pushing ahead with strongest possible demands for immediate decision by higher authority or holding off until you have returned and can reappraise the situation. I will obtain USIB approval of three-mission program tomorrow as added support for the intelligence community, ~~hope~~ and hope for your views soonest.

MSC; bec - b/p  
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Rusk returns on Sunday and State Department continues to prefer  
that he represent them in any discussion on low-level flights.  
Additionally, there are rumblings in State to reopen discussion of  
[ ] projects, some of which they consider unduly provocative.  
This I think reflects the Thompson attitude. McNamara leaving  
Sunday but will be back for duty on Tuesday, 7 May. Bundy has  
instructed me to send to McNamara and Ball a copy of our low-level  
memo and I am complying.